Engaging Parents and Students from Diverse Populations in the Context of Distance Learning

JASON SNIPES

Hello! I'm Jason Snipes. I'm the Director of Alliance Research for REL West. I just want to introduce the topic and the speakers and describe the objectives for today's webinar. REL West is very aware of the challenges facing districts in our region and across the country as they move into distance learning models in order to adapt to the COVID-19 epidemic. And though family and student engagement is an ongoing challenge in most schools, previous research as well as the experiences of the stakeholders we work with suggest that these problems will be exacerbated in the context of the current crisis, particularly for Black, Latinx, and English learner students.

To respond to this need, we organized a discussion of both some of the relevant research as well as the experiences of practitioners dealing directly with these challenges. Today's speakers are Margit Birge, Senior Program Associate at WestEd, and Barbara Jones, a Professional Learning Associate, also from WestEd. We are also lucky enough to be joined by three people from districts in our region who are dealing directly with these issues. They are D'Lisa Crain, Administrator for the Department of Family-School Partnerships from Washoe County School District in Nevada; Claudia Medina, Coordinator of Family and Community Engagement Programs from the Alameda Unified School District in California; and Sara Stone, Chief Academic Officer, also from the Alameda Unified School District in California.

The objectives of today's webinar are that participants learn about what the research tells us about family engagement with diverse populations, understand how engagement strategies need to shift in the context of distance learning, and hear what two districts have experienced as they attempt to address this issue, including their successes, their challenges, and their learnings.

In terms of the specific agenda, first, we'll hear from some folks about the research. Margit Birge will give an overview regarding some of the research on the importance of family engagement and key strategies for reaching families and students from vulnerable populations. Then Barbara Jones will be discussing some of the relevant, emerging lessons from a study of teachers discussing their experiences and evolving practice in the context of online learning. We'll then hear from our three district staff regarding their experiences and adaptations in the current context.

This will be followed by a discussion section, with the first five minutes of discussion among the district staff regarding their adaptations and learnings during COVID-19, and then 15 minutes of Q&A, during which you'll get a chance to hear a discussion of some of the questions

you've posed through the chat. And finally, we'll have the closing and a survey. I'll now turn it over to Margit to get started on the content.

MARGIT BIRGE

Thank you, Jason. I want to just start by saying thank you to all the educators here today for making time to be here, but most importantly, for the incredible work you've been doing since schools closed in March. And I want to thank all the parents. Many of you, of course, are both educators and parents. But parents, you have been doing an incredible job at home since schools closed.

And I won't go on with my thank yous, but I just have to say, we are in extraordinary times. We are being challenged in ways we could not even have imagined just a few months ago. My task here is to share a few highlights from the research that serve as a foundation and hopefully a guide for what we can and must do to engage with our families and communities.

So I'll be talking about what is family engagement, a quick definition—why is it an essential strategy for student success, and what are some key components of culturally responsive family engagement? So I'll be doing that pretty quickly. I want to make sure we have plenty of time to hear from our practitioners on the ground, because I know that's what we all want to know— "How are you doing this?"

The definition that I'm using just comes from research—that it's an intentional and systemic partnership, and it's a partnership where educators, family members, community members share responsibility for students. I think those are the key elements of a definition that we need to use.

We've known for decades that family engagement has a positive impact on many student outcomes, and that's true for academic outcomes, social-emotional skills, college and career readiness. There's a tremendous body of research. And I won't be going into that today, but I do want to let you know that we have references at the end of the slides that you'll be getting. We'll be emailing the slides to you from this presentation and from all of the presenters today. So you'll be getting those, and there's lots of exciting research to dig into, if you're not familiar with it.

One of the research that I did want to highlight today is the work that was done in Chicago, where they found that schools with stronger ties between educators, families, and community had higher levels of student achievement. I think what's especially noteworthy is that the stronger ties were characterized by teacher actions. If you look at this list of teacher actions— actually, three of these are really doable even during shelter-in-place and physical distancing. So the understanding of local issues, understanding parent concerns, embracing parents as partners—those are things that we need to be doing at this time and that are grounded in the research we've known for many years.

So what does culturally responsive family engagement look like? I'm going to just highlight five components that I think are important that come from the research—the partnership orientation, the asset-based approach, relationships of trust and respect, two-way communication, and capacity building of educators and families.

So the first is the partnership orientation, and the key here is that families and school staff see each other as equal partners. This isn't something that can happen overnight, but we know

that that partner orientation is the one that we're working towards as kind of our north star. That's what we're working towards.

The next element, the next component, is the asset-based approach. Adopting and supporting educators to use an asset-based approach is the starting point, is the foundation. A lot of the messages in our society in this country, they've promoted the idea that somehow poor families and families of color don't care about education, and too often, we hear educators blaming families for students' failings. And it comes from the system that we live in. It's the water and the air we breathe. So it means we have to intentionally develop an asset approach, and that means we start with the knowledge that all families want the best for their children—and there's research that can confirm that, if anyone doubts that—and we look for and build on the cultural capital and the "funds of knowledge" in our communities and in our families. Again, this is a belief. It takes time to work through this, but that's the starting point we need to have.

The third component is relationships of trust and respect, and these, too, must be built over time. You can see again—this is from Dr. Karen Mapp at Harvard—that those relationships need to be established between home and school before we can have meaningful family engagement.

And the other research that's important about trust and respect is that we're starting from behind with many of our families. As this research points out, longstanding dynamics of miscommunication and distrust have existed between schools and their communities. We're learning more and more about historical and multigenerational trauma. So we need to keep in mind the roots of distrust. The school-to-prison pipeline that's been well-documented, historical removal of children of color from their families, deportations of parents and family members are just a few examples of why distrust is prevalent in our communities.

So we need to do a lot of extra work to build that trust, and one of the ways that we do that is two-way communication. Too often—and I want to say, these are helpful things we do—we send email messages, we send auto phone messages, text messages. These are helpful. I don't want to imply that they're not important to do, but they're examples of one-way communication. Two-way communication means we start by listening, and we learn about the cultural assets. We learn about the conditions in our communities and who our families are, what their needs are. So we start by listening, and then we have two-way communication. We have a dialogue with our families. And again, this may sound like a high lift, but you'll be hearing from districts today who are really doing this, and they're doing it in the context of the difficult conditions that we're in now.

As I've listened to voices of parents and educators in recent weeks, I've been reminded of Maslow's hierarchy. I'm sure many of you are familiar. This dates back to the mid-20th century. That sounds like so long ago, and it's still relevant today. In a nutshell, any human being needs to have their physiological needs met, they need a sense of safety, we need a sense of belonging before we can engage in learning. And this goes for children as well as adults. So we need to engage in listening to learn where our students' and our families' needs are, when we reach out to partner with them.

The last component of family engagement that I want to talk about is the capacity-building of educators and families. And these are the four capacity-building capabilities that—or capacities, rather—that the dual-capacity framework for family-school partnerships promotes.

And if you're not familiar with this, there'll be a URL that you can go to, that will tell you more about this. Version two of this framework was just released in July of last year. It comes out of Harvard from Dr. Karen Mapp and her graduate students that have been working with her and her colleagues there. And so I encourage you to check out that website after the webinar.

We know that both educators and families need capacities to partner with each other. Again, it's not something that can happen overnight, and it's not something that we all have ever learned how to do. We all have our own misconceptions of each other's roles. We have our own fears and prejudices. So the capacity-building of educators and families means that skills and knowledge—teachers need training in cultural responsiveness. They need training in how to communicate with families. Families need to understand how to navigate the education system and the role that they play in supporting their child's education. None of this we can take for granted.

Connections and networks means we need trusting relationships between teachers and families like we've talked about. We need social networks among families to share information and support each other, and connections with community agencies and services.

Beliefs and values—cognition, it's called, in this capacity-building framework—teachers need to believe in the value of partnering with families, that it's an essential component of what their work is. And that means we need administrators and support from our leadership and our boards and our systems. It's not just something teachers can do alone, but we need to value those assets of families and students. Families need to believe that they have multiple roles to play in their child's education.

And the confidence capacity is having that sense of confidence and self-efficacy, so that both teachers and family members feel confident about the roles that they play, and they can take on leadership roles. So again, it's not just a beginning stage of being…partnering with your teacher, but it's becoming a leader in your community, it's becoming a leader in the school community, and all of those things are a process of capacity-building.

So these are the highlights of research that I wanted to share today. Certainly, we could spend lots of time on research, but I want to move on and pass the mic over to my colleague Barbara Jones. She's been doing some very exciting research with teachers in distance learning.

BARBARA JONES

Hi, everybody. I'm Barbara Jones. I'm with WestEd. I'm so excited to be talking with you today about what we're learning about teachers transitioning from being in a physical space with their students to being just online, like we are here today, and what's working and what's not working. I want you to keep in mind what Margit has already shared about the importance of culturally responsive principles in this new learning environment and see how they're mapping onto what teachers say are working for them in this space.

All right, so the study that I'm going to be talking about is an evaluation study of a WestEd course called *Student Agency in Learning*. In this course, we have about 70 educators from Tucson, Arizona, who primarily serve low-SES English learner students. Every single week, they fill out a journal, an online journal, and tell us what their experience is like as they've transitioned into remote learning, and kind of what's bubbling up for them. So every week we

take a look at that, and we find trends and themes and try to understand what's really important to support student learning and agency in this space.

We've pulled out five themes, and I'll be talking about these in the rest of the slides. They range from establishing a learning culture to helping students support one another. So what do I mean by an online learning culture? When I first heard this term myself, I thought, "Of course. All classes are a learning culture. That's what everyone is doing there." But what I'm talking about more specifically is focusing on the learning that takes place right here, right now, for its own purpose, not a future orientation, not an orientation towards grades or tests.

But to do this, it means that students need to share where they are in their learning right now, maybe what they don't understand, what's confusing for them. And so a safe space is needed to get students to express that vulnerability and ask for support.

So three things that teachers are doing to promote an online learning culture is leveraging the school and home connection, building that bridge, by seeking and sharing information with students about what their current experiences are like. And for teachers, also to model what it means to share. Teachers are having to create motivation without grades, which is interesting. Some teachers that I've been reading what they've been saying are pretty unhappy with this. They felt that that really was an amazing motivator with students, and they're a little bit lost for what to do now. But it's also a blessing in disguise, as we shift from a compliance mode and an orientation towards future outcomes—"Why are we doing this work today? Why are we learning today?" And engaging students in those conversations.

Because if they don't shift to understand why it's important, they're not going to do their work. They don't have the teachers walking around the classroom, watching them. They need to develop their own internal accountability. And teachers do that in part by supporting students' positive learner identities and their agency.

One of the principals that is taking this course shared about just their joy in seeing the trust that's being built between teachers and students, and also with parents and other caregivers. And that is a critical piece that is coming in here—that the learning culture needs to expand to include those that are supporting students in their learning. So to let them know, what are the rituals and routines? What are the expectations? How much should you help? How much should you correct students' work or let it be the way it is so that teachers can use that as a source of evidence of student learning?

And then again about the culture. Appreciating individual differences. This principal said, "Everyone online can see and hear your surroundings, and sometimes that can be a little intimidating, but we are all trusting and respecting one another." So it's critical to support individual differences in that context.

The next thing is about gathering and responding to information about student learning and well-being. That is so important as students' learning environments are in flux. There's so much that's unknown. Teachers don't really know from day to day what the situation is with students. So doing that regular check-in, surveying students and parents, starting lessons with questions, and then gathering evidence of learning in alternative ways.

So instead of relying on a test, each day paying attention to what students are saying, doing, making, or writing in the context of their learning is the best source of evidence that teachers

have in an online space to help students move their learning forward. And then also to engage students in doing this themselves. Because a big thing that we need to do is encourage student autonomy and independence in their learning at this point.

And part of the way that that's done is by creating transparency in learning. And that is in part helping students understand what the intended learning is for them. So it's not just a worksheet or a chapter they need to read, but what is the actual learning they're supposed to take away from it, besides just knowing what the procedure is and the activity? And what does it look like when they meet that goal? What are the success criteria?

Teachers can co-create these with students so that they can internalize the expectations and develop their own "why" for doing the work. Students are also in these contexts better able to gauge where they are in their own learning and advance their learning themselves.

Teachers are paying a lot of attention to how they're supporting student learner identities as they want them to do the bigger lift themselves for monitoring and advancing their own learning. One teacher expressed how students in this space are forced to become independent and problem solvers and take on new roles as learners.

Another teacher remarked—and I've heard this widely—is there has been, for many, a big surprise in who is showing up and doing the work and thriving in this new environment, and that it's often the kids that have been quiet in the actual brick and mortar spaces. And so that's been a silver lining, is finding a new way to engage those students who otherwise were maybe being somewhat left behind.

And then the last theme is the importance of engaging peers in supporting one another in learning. To me, I feel like this is *so* important as teachers are trying to shift the teacher and student roles so that students can be both leaders and learners, and they themselves can show themselves as leaders and learners.

Students can take on a leadership role in supporting one another. This helps their identity as learners, their sense of belonging. But teachers need to build students' capacity to do this, for example, using the success criteria to give peer feedback, helping them understand how to have productive conversations and extend each other's thinking through discourse, and then designing those collaborative learning projects so students can learn to problem-solve together.

One of the teachers talked about this idea of how her students are reaching out to one another to check in, to give them a little push to get involved, to participate in class. And it makes me think about how in this course that these teachers are in, one of the things they've been saying to us, and that we've been promoting, is the idea that as students gain agency and ownership over their own learning, that it doesn't just…it doesn't end with themselves, but it expands to include their peers.

So there's a group agency that's created, a sense of group responsibility, that each student can be a supporter for their peers and feel important, and that they have a critical role to play in this environment. Which teachers are saying, "It's so important. To get students to show up, they have to know why. They have to feel like their role is important and they have something to offer others."

So some of the key takeaways, just to reiterate, is that it's important to establish a learning culture and one that includes families so they know what the norms and expectations are. To use evidence of daily learning to plan out that learning. And to engage students in that process so they also can look at evidence of learning to promote their own and their peers' learning and know what to do about it.

There's the realization that student learner identity and agency *are* the key drivers of learning in an online learning space. It's not the teacher anymore, it's not the grades or the tests. It has to be turned within. And that peers are critical in providing support for one another, particularly as teachers have so many students they need to respond to. But students still need to have those one-on-one experiences, get personal feedback, have a thought partner. And students can step in and play that role for one another.

And with that, I'll turn it over to D'Lisa Crain, who will be talking about the amazing work that they're doing in Washoe County School District. Thank you.

D'LISA CRAIN

Thanks, Barbara. This is D'Lisa. Hello to everyone out there, and thank you to WestEd for giving us a space to share our journey in Washoe County. So just a little bit of context about our school district—we're the second largest school district in the state of Nevada, second to Clark County, our friends in Las Vegas. Geographically, we're about the size of the state of Connecticut. So picture that; we're pretty large. We stretch out far and wide.

Before COVID, more than 50% of our students received free or reduced lunch. Since COVID, we've definitely seen the need for food increase dramatically in our community. And with Nevada's economy being heavily tied to the service industry, our unemployment rates are some of the highest in the nation. As you can see from the slide, we are also 64,000 students and families strong, and we are racially and ethnically diverse.

So, our journey. This coming weekend will be about two months since our governor closed our schools in the state. Our district was just at the beginning of our two-week spring break. It was going to be a much-needed spring break. But instead, our leadership started immediately coordinating food. We have a longstanding partnership with our food bank. We have food pantries in our schools so, luckily, that transition, I think, was easier than if we didn't have that partnership.

We also have very strong and passionate department leaders in our central office. So our Title I department, our social and emotional learning department, our equity department, intervention, counseling, communications—they were all really key collaborators in the beginning on the family wellness side and the distance learning side.

But I remember our conversations very early on started with family wellness. So we started defining that. We had so many resources flying at us. Our inboxes were full of mental health resources, physical health, racial bias and discrimination, emergency services. So I think that group of key collaborators was so important in the beginning to start talking about what were we hearing that our families need and how can we organize these resources and get them out into our community. I'm reminded of our intervention administrator. She said, "Resources are changing by the hour if not the day." And so we were very intentional and wanted to make sure we weren't giving families resources of organizations that had already shuttered their doors.

And then on the distance learning side, that was led by our chief of academics, our curriculum and instruction, our ELD and 21st century departments, along with the other departments I mentioned. So as you can see, we led with daily personal contact with students and families.

When our teachers came back from spring break, they were provided two days of professional learning. Part of that, that team had built scripts, because we wanted to lead with that personal contact, that social and emotional learning, asking about equitable access.

We knew devices and Wi-Fi were going to be a challenge, so we had paper packets that mirrored our online resources. And there was a strong group that also advocated for those to be at a minimum translated into Spanish for pre-K through sixth grade. So our packets went pre-K through 12th grade. And in that first week, we handed…our buses delivered 56,000 packets of learning materials for the first three weeks to all corners of our community.

Modeling the lessons for students was really important. So in the beginning, our math department and our ELD…some of our ELD teachers in our district started doing YouTube videos. And so we thought it would be a great idea to start pulling all of those things together in YouTube and organizing them so they could support our distance learning materials, and then we could push those out via social media. So parents were understanding how to play the math game with their kids. They could see it happening. And a lot of the videos are also in English and Spanish.

As I mentioned before, we have strong voices in our district, thank goodness, for equitable access, but we have many challenges. We still have 5,000 kids in our community with no Wi-Fi access at home and we have 16,000 kids without a laptop. So as you can imagine, it's pretty hard for high school students who are trying to do their assignments on a phone, if they have a phone.

And during the first two weeks—so one of our tribal communities didn't have any Wi-Fi access at all. The tribal lands are in a pretty rural location about 15 miles from the nearest school, so access to resources is pretty limited. And once the tribal leaders opened up Wi-Fi access in the community, we had families sitting in cars in front of the community centers to access Wi-Fi.

So even though we've received a lot of positive feedback regarding the personal connections and how COVID has really forged stronger relationships between home and school, that definitely wasn't 100%. We had some families that said we were calling too much, and we had some families that didn't receive a personal phone call. So we still have some work to do there.

COVID really brought the inequities in our community to the forefront and made them far more visible than they were before. And we still need to work through our implicit bias. We have had challenging conversations regarding mandated reporting. Of course, we need to keep kids safe and we have to do that by law, but we also need to challenge our assumptions about our families. And so when you're looking in a Zoom meeting, and the home that you're looking at doesn't look the same as yours, we have some people that appreciate the differences, and we have some people that…implicit bias…some of our staff, implicit bias creeps in, and we need more supports around that.

So we've had a number of successes, and we definitely need to celebrate those. In our department, we've had family-school partnerships. The parent-teacher home visit program

from Sacramento has been in our district for more than ten years. We have about 25 schools that participate in that this year. And we've checked in with the teachers who have done lots of home visits, and they tell us that their relationships before COVID were strong, and that's really helped them to connect with families and kids. Families have opened up with them because they have those relationships. It's been easier to reach the families. And kids are more willing to open up about where they're at, too. So that relationship is incredibly important.

We have some incredible community partners that really hold trusting relationships with many of our families. So our tribal leaders and their education staff. We have more than 50 family liaisons in our schools, and our student graduation advocates through our equity department, they are all on the front lines supporting families every day. And those trusted relationships have been critical, because sometimes if there's a disconnect between a school and the family, those community partners are critical to being able to personally connect with families.

Early on, we were also hearing that our frontline staff were really experiencing secondary trauma. They were on the phone for 10, 11 hours a day with families, and they were trying to take care of their own families as well. So in the beginning, our counseling and our social work department offered them professional learning on secondary trauma—what is it, so that they could understand it and start to really take care of themselves, implement that self-care that we know is so important.

So it's been a long two months, and we're definitely learning and trying to improve every single day. It's been challenging and, in some ways, rewarding. I'll turn it over to Sara and Claudia from Alameda. Thank you.

SARA STONE

Hello, everyone. This is Sara Stone from Alameda Unified School District. I'm excited to share our journey. It has definitely been challenging, as my colleague just named. And I do feel like we have learned so many important things along the way. I actually look at this time as the best type of research, which is action research.

So, a little bit about Alameda Unified. We serve 10,000 students, pre-K through adult. We are in the East Bay, so we reflect the East Bay community. We're very diverse. We're diverse socioeconomically as well as culturally and linguistically, with over 40 different languages spoken in our district.

When we started this journey, it was not lost on me that as an entire world, we were facing something that we had never faced before, and that everyone was just steeped in trauma. And so, we looked immediately to find what types of resources that were out there to support trauma-informed practice.

One of the things that was the most helpful for me, actually, was an article that we found on the Teaching Tolerance website about trauma-informed practice. And what it showed us quickly was that we really needed to prioritize some things over other things as we were making our plans. The biggest thing that we needed to prioritize was really thinking about the well-being of students and families, continuing to foster caring relationships, try our best to create a sense of safety in such an unsafe time, and again cultivate some hope and create some spaces for hope. This meant that we had to think a little bit less about some of the things that we'd been thinking about for a long time around compliance and making sure that kids

were lockstep with curriculum and standards, and we really had to think about how are we creating spaces for kids to be able to come together with their teacher, have that sense of hope and safety, and really make sure that they were having spaces and time to have some constructive feedback to support their understanding of the new learning.

So what we really focused on was thinking about what we were doing more of, as opposed to less of. So we were looking at more time to really create that sense of community, to spend time when we were in our Zoom calls checking in with students, making sure that we had some ways to survey the well-being of our students, and use that information to create plans for families and students that maybe didn't have the level of access that we needed for them to have in order to be successful.

We wanted to make sure that we were spending time providing feedback, not grading. We were looking at opportunities for learning as opposed to due dates and assignments. We wanted to celebrate when students were able to complete work, but also recognize that not all of our students had what they needed at home to be able to complete work. So there were celebrations also of just being able to connect with your teacher, whether it was through Zoom or in some other way.

And we wanted to make sure that we were cognizant of the fact that we're looking at an entire system, and that not all of our families had enough internet bandwidth or access or had the devices that they needed. So we spent a lot of time putting those things together. But we also needed for our schedule to reflect that, so that we weren't having a kindergartener who might have a seventh-grade sibling and a high school sibling all on Zoom at the same time trying to access the learning.

And we wanted to make sure that we were focused on key standards, key skills, essential things that we wanted to continue to allow students to have access to, as opposed to trying to master every single thing that was out there.

Again, I think the biggest takeaway for us is that we really wanted to see this as an opportunity. There are a lot of opportunities in this in terms of professional development, in terms of understanding best practices, and like I said at the beginning, just action research in such a challenging and traumatic time. So I'm going to pass it over to my colleague, Claudia Medina, to talk a little bit more about some of the thinking that we had while we were putting this together. Thank you.

CLAUDIA MEDINA

Thank you, Sara. Hello, everyone. So we wanted to be very explicit in our work, and modeling some of Maslow's ideas, we wanted to frame what we were up to and be really clear and build the partnerships, the social partnerships, within our district.

We started focusing on physiological needs—food, basic needs, whatever was going to be necessary for our children to first feel supported and safe at home. The grab-and-go meals that all districts are doing, but all of that coordinated in a way that was clear and evident to the community.

We went on to focus on, what are we doing to provide some sort of safety needs. We activated our networks, whether it was PTAs, providing…going from room parents to Zoom parents at the very beginning in supporting the technical needs.

Then on to our language-based community networks. Specifically, we focused on what we call our equity roundtables. And I'll speak a little later on our ALCANCE, our Latino Achievement Round Table, and how that has helped.

Then we coordinated the efforts for that sense of love and belonging. And, of course, the value and importance of the well-being checks on students, families, amongst each other, by doing a weekly student engagement survey—all of these efforts were coordinated within a framework so that we all knew what we were up to, and we were all very intentional in the work.

How are we building that capacity? Well, we're being very specific on, well, what are the capabilities we're working to build? Well, we have multilingual resources on how to navigate online learning, grade-level resources.

The connections—leveraging existing networks to connect our families at this time. We know that a lot of our ELD or our immigrant families do not read email. Emails can be very long. So we're leveraging WhatsApp, WeChat, Facebook, anything that's going to get families to connect and leverage that knowledge base.

We also are providing surveys, multilingual surveys. We have translated them in six languages. We're partnering with those families to calibrate, "OK, how are we doing? Is this too much, too little, just right?" We're playing with that feedback, back and forth. And we hope to continue building parents' self-efficacy.

I think the number one fear of all families, of any parent even on this call is, are we being adequate? Are we providing our children with what they need most? So we are really aware of that as parents ourselves and making sure that parents have the tools they need to help.

We all know that because our families of color, because our Latinos, African Americans, immigrants, we know they're going to be the hardest hit and most affected by this pandemic, that we have to provide as many tools as we can. And so this just provides a demonstration of the work that we've done. We've translated everything—from how to get online, how to use Google, how to Zoom, who needs a Chromebook—in all languages. Also, here are the FAQs on what this is all about. And then have the opportunities to provide that feedback.

We have been very intentional in reaching out, because we know—we know, you know who's going to be the most affected by all of this. And it is upon us to do the best we can to leverage resources to support them.

SARA STONE

I just want to say that I think that the biggest lesson learned on our end was the importance of really taking it a little bit slow and really being intentional around—going back to the idea of Maslow's hierarchy and being trauma-informed. I would say that we still have a lot to learn. I think the slower that we've been able to go, given that we also are in this moment of crisis and trauma, has really served us well, because we've been able to be very intentional about some of the decisions we've made. I think Claudia, or is it D'Lisa? Yeah, D'Lisa, you have…

D'LISA CRAIN

For us, one of the lessons learned is that our community partners are critical. Most recently, we're hearing that there's some abuse happening in our community regarding rent and

landlords and threatening particularly our undocumented families. And so, the district wouldn't be the ones to take the lead on, necessarily—we're not experts on renters' rights, but we have a local PICO chapter that's a community organizing group, and they are helping us. We're helping them to connect with families, and they're helping us by explaining sort of the legal ramifications and empowering our families with good information about their rights.

MARGIT BIRGE

Claudia, why don't you share just a couple lessons learned?

CLAUDIA MEDINA

Absolutely. So one of the great things that we learned is that we had already established our Latino Achievement Round Table in Alameda, and that brought with it a sense of connection already within the community. The round table is called ALCANCE. It's our Latino Achievement Round Table, supporting families to navigate the public school system.

So for them, some of the lessons learned here is that you've got to leverage multiple sources of communication. With them, they're speaking about, "Where can I get my tax refund? Where can I get additional food? Who's succeeding at keeping your kids engaged? What happened to our old values where our children would listen, and now we've lost a sense of control to gaming?" They support each other. So a lesson learned there is how do we transfer that to other…to our other round tables, where they feel that sense of safety and community.

We've leveraged also our Alameda Point Collaborative where we have a lot of our most vulnerable communities. We've managed to work with them on things that we were not able to accomplish before, including establishing internet connection for families for the very first time. So the sense of urgency has actually been transferred across the agencies. All of our CDOs are connected. All of our after-school programs are connected. We are better together. And I think this has certainly created a stronger sense of partnership, but all based on trust and connection and relationships.

MARGIT BIRGE

Thank you to all of you for sharing incredible work that you're doing. It's very inspiring because many of the things you're describing I think will be carrying forward as we go into the next period. Some of the connections, collaboration, new partnerships are things that we'll be able to sustain, hopefully, and will create foundations for some exciting work going forward. We have a lot of questions coming in the chat, as well as great sharing of resources and experiences. Thank you again to everyone for sharing.